

Behind walked an escort of oddly attired persons, who alternated the ringing of hand-bells with the singing of Christmas carols.

No Christmas spectacle was of such gorgeous pageantry as the revels of the Lord of Misrule. This bizarre personage held court from All Hallow Eve to Candlemas. During that period masking and mumming, with all kinds of games and pastimes, were the order of the day. The Lord of Misrule reigned in the royal palace as well as in the mansions of nobles and gentlemen. Even the grave lawyers in the Inns of Court acknowledged his sway. He was the "Master of Merry Disports."

In glancing at the morris-dancers, really a species of mummers, it is proper to include the wonderful sword-dancers of Sweden, who perform most intricate figures amid a dazzling flash of keen, naked steel. Then there is the Scotch sword-dance, performed with bare feet between two drawn claymores crossed.

A curious relic of the pagan feast of Pomona was the English custom of drinking cider upon Christmas Eve in an apple orchard, throwing the dregs at the tree, and singing:

Health be to thee,
Good apple tree.

Only good bearing trees were thus honored, however.

The term Christmas box, meaning a Christmas gift, arose from the ancient custom of keeping a box aboard ships at sea for the purpose of receiving contributions for the priest celebrating masses at home for the wandering mariners. The women relatives of the sailors, too, used to solicit offerings, carrying a box for the purpose from house to house. The day next after Christmas, St. Stephen's, got its present English title of Boxing Day from the custom of giving Christmas boxes upon it.

The "tying of greens" in churches at Christmas-time has stoutly maintained its popularity. It is a custom of great antiquity, and, like others mentioned here, has a pagan origin. It was common among Christians as far back as the fifteenth century, and, according to an author of that period, was borrowed from "the pagan trimmyng of the temples with hangings, floures, boughes, and garlondes." Ancient religious calendars refer to it as a regular ceremony of the Christian Church, and not only houses of worship, but private dwellings and even the streets, were decked with evergreens. For interiors holly was the favorite bough, the English variety, with its showy red berries, being peculiarly adapted to decorative purposes. Ivy was in demand for exteriors; it was displayed over the doors of inns, and largely used when arboreal standards were erected on the streets during the fifteenth century. Sometimes these were blown down by sudden storms—a mishap invariably ascribed to the malevolence of demons.

Branches of laurel, box, and bay were always in favor for decoration. The mistletoe was interdicted, so far as the churches were concerned, because it was the plant typical of the Druids, who called it the "heal-all," and at their heathen Yule-tide feasts laid it reverently upon their altars. The Druid priests cut it from the oaks surrounding their sacrificial stones, using a curious brass hatchet called a "celt." One of the latter was found by a friend of the writer in a certain Druids' grove in Ireland well known to antiquarians. It was one of many similar weapons discovered from time to time in various parts of the British Isles.

It is interesting to note that about three hundred years ago a custom prevailed at York Cathedral of laying a branch of mistletoe upon the high altar on Christmas Day. At the same time a proclamation was read declaring the city free to all comers. In later times instances have been recorded of English rectors ordering the removal of mistletoe from church interiors in which it had been utilized among other greens for Christmas adornment.



Let no pleasure tempt thee, no ambition corrupt thee, no example sway thee to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollily, for a good conscience is a continual Christmas.—*Benjamin Franklin.*

Christmas in Hawaii

By Margaret Kenwill

In our land and in our literature Christmas is always associated with cold and frost and snow. The Christmas story appeals to us in the shivering figure under the thin shawl, in the hungry eyes looking through frosty window-panes at the light and warmth and plenty in which they may have no part. It delights us with its pictures of cozy happiness about a glowing hearth, with its tales of family reunions and childish joys. Indeed, it is difficult for dwellers in this so-called temperate zone to imagine a Christmas without these accessories, and the snow-laden evergreen-tree, or the jingle of sleigh-bells ringing clear through the frosty, star-lit air.

But in Hawaii, without any of them, Christmas is kept joyously, and has its full share of pleasure and pathos. Imagine, if you can, a balmy Christmas Eve, with the shoppers in their white muslins, fluttering in and out of the tempting Chinese and Japanese shops.

No barefoot child appeals to your sympathy, but smiling barefooted women in their loose, flowing, and trailing dresses give you their cheerful, friendly salutation—"Aloha," as they throw their garlands of flowers about your neck. These garlands or *leis* (pronounced lays) form an actual part of the dress of both men and women.

They are rarely seen without this adornment. In the Hawaiian the love of flowers or the wearing of them is no fad or fashion, and the result of no culture, but real and innate. And a gift of flowers, a crowning with garlands, is a spontaneous act of good will toward an arriving or departing guest.

It was my good fortune last Christmas Eve to ride through the streets of Honolulu with a friend who was preparing to fill several pairs of small stockings.

The windows of the bazaars were gay with curious Japanese and Chinese toys, and the native small boy was everywhere popping the ubiquitous firecracker. For Christmas, rather than the Fourth of July, is the time when fireworks do most abound in Hawaii.

The churches of the Christian Chinese and Japanese, as well as those of the native Hawaiians, were gay with colored lanterns strung in luminous rows over and before their little chapels.

Within, the Christmas-tree—in more than its American, or even its German, splendor—blazed and glowed, and the happy, hospitable Orientals and Polynesians dispensed gifts to all comers.

No holiday, be it Christmas Day or Kamehameha Day, is complete without its *luan* or feast. To the native any day is a good day for a holiday and a feast, but Christmas would not be Christmas without a *luan*.

The preparations begin early the preceding day. The young men and boys go to the mountain streams for shrimp, and the older men to the sea for fish. Poi and sweet potatoes and plenty of pork and beef are secured. Then in the evening the food, wrapped securely in the strong *ti* leaf, is buried with hot stones in the *emu* or underground oven. By next morning this Aladdin oven has done its perfect work, and the feast, with all its juices and nutrition in it, is ready for the feasters. And it is most enjoyable—to those who like it.

After such a feast, at which I was a guest one Christmas, and which was part of a Sunday-school concert, there were singing and reciting in Hawaiian and in the Gilbert Island dialect.

There was one class of Gilbert Islanders, middle-aged men and women, who took their places like little children to recite their Bible verses and sing their Sunday-school hymns. They lacked the grace and ease and assurance of their cousins, the Hawaiians, and took their little part seriously, as good children should. Their heavy, dark, unlovely yet amiable faces lent no expression to their words; but their curiously pierced and adorned ears and lips gave an interest to their effort quite apart from any that might be evoked by their elocution.

In every little village, which is a part of every great

plantation all over the islands, it is the custom of the planters to provide a feast at Christmas for their people. And in every church, which is a part of every village or hamlet, the Christmas-tree is to be found laden with its presents for great and small.

Even in far-away, isolated Molokai not a leper child or man or woman is forgotten. Last Christmas, after every soul in that settlement had been remembered, a request came from some of the musical members of the stricken community for band instruments. There were those among them who had formerly been members of the Royal Hawaiian Band of Honolulu, and they wished to form a band on Molokai. The response was prompt, and so generous that not only were the instruments secured, but uniforms for the musicians as well.

Nowhere are there more generous and thoughtful givers than in Hawaii, and nowhere is Christmas a more joyous time—a time of fruits and flowers and sunshine, of blue skies, and of shining, wonderful seas. A most beautiful land, deserving its name, "The Paradise of the Pacific."



Some Christmases I Remember

By Rachel Dunkirk

The waking on that first Christmas I remember was in every sense in the sunny South. A tall black negro woman, still a strange sight to the little Northern girl's eyes, said, "Merry C'is'mus, honey!" Why, yes, it was Christmas! There was an overwhelming sense of having lost so much time. There were presents piled on the floor in front of the big brick fireplace. I have no recollection of what those presents were. That Christmas is marked by the memory of a visit to a church standing outside of the city, with a walk that circled from the road to the door; of gazing in childish wonder at the grass, green and beautiful, the far-spreading branches of the live-oak, the flowers blooming out-of-doors, and of the strangeness of wearing a white dress and a broad-brimmed hat on Christmas Day; all made it seem like a dream. To the little Northern girl, taught to wait on herself, the oppressive attentions of the coal-black nurse, with her gay bandanna, were very like the consciousness of an intangible person, an apprehension that so frequently mars a beautiful dream. The whole day was passed out-of-doors—the afternoon on horseback, sitting on the horse in front of that prince of companions, my father. We went through woods so thick as to force us to bend close to the horse's back, and out of the woods on to the beach, the blue waters of the Atlantic almost washing the horse's feet. Back to the city, to have the ruins caused by shot and shell pointed out, and to dimly comprehend that there was a time when men and women were sold in that building, when Chloe—she of the gay bandanna—could have been bought as I bought the bunch of flowers in the market yesterday, and carried away with no more possibility of deciding what she should do. The awful impression of sadness that this comprehension of the evils of slavery made upon me has never been lost, and on my return I greeted the mistress of my wardrobe and bath with a feeling that nearly approached love. Night came, and with it the consciousness that there was a part of Christmas that was not for me. I was to remain upstairs out of sight, for a dinner was to be given. The sound of horses' feet, the steps on the broad veranda, the murmur of strange voices, all made me heart-hungry for the North, where I knew at this time candles were burning on the Christmas-tree, and a sweet-faced grandmother and a grandfather whose stern face grew lovely with smiles were perhaps thinking of the little girl in that strange Southern land. Then the summons downstairs—the blinding lights, the strange faces, the bewildering questions, the consciousness of being somewhat of a curiosity—made that experience so disagreeable as to stamp it on my mind.

Then the comfort of Chloe's broad lap and soft hands

and cooing voice; and the next I remember, Christmas was in the past—it was yesterday.

The next Christmas that imprints itself on my mind was one that must have thrilled the heart of Santa Claus when he started on his journey with the reindeers, so covered was every roof and tree with snow and ice. How the sleigh-bells jingled! How the skates gleamed! Everybody was full of Christmas cheer. The very memory of the chill when I first stepped out of bed on the floor in the gray morning light is still vivid. I see again the light so faint, so dim, as to show only the outline of the mantel where the stocking was hung the night before. What misgivings I had of the ability of Santa Claus, with all his magic, to get through the very small opening above the grate! How positively I insisted that the fire should die before I went to sleep! It lay a perfectly dark mass under the plump stocking. Then came the blind groping for the things on the chairs; the inability to get the presents from the stockings; the hurrying back to bed with the few things that could be reached, and then the impatient waiting for light enough to see them. Dolls and dishes; tin kitchen, completely furnished; books, ring, candy, and fruit; work-basket, rocking-chair—how beautiful everything was! how wonderful was Santa Claus to know the very wish of one's heart!

But that day marked the first taking up of life's burden. Standing full of joy beside the table in the parlor, on which the Christmas things were arranged, before the curtains were drawn for the evening, I caught sight of the face of a boy hanging on to the area railing, a face so full of longing as to make me feel in one swift moment the awful misery of poverty. I did not know until that moment that there were children who never feel the bliss of having every wish realized at Christmas. The beauty, the joy of possession, has never been the same, for I have known that some one lacked.

Another Christmas, in a big hotel. Several weeks spent there had made some friends. The seamstress came to make a silk apron for a niece of one of the ladies—just my size, I was told. With perfect faith I stood and was measured and fitted for the apron for the fortunate little girl. Christmas morning found only candy in a lean and limp stocking; I crept back to bed forlorn and lonesome, to be raised to a frenzy of delight by that best of all companions, my father. Santa Claus had sent him word that he would reach the house at ten o'clock—so many poor children were being attended to that he did not have time to get to hotels until ten. He would blow a horn in the parlor hall when he had things arranged, and then I could come. How slowly the hands of the clock moved! How hard it was to keep out of the hall! but I must obey instructions. At last, just when I had forgotten the promised visit in watching a company of soldiers go by, the horn blew in the parlor hall, there was the jingle of bells, the pattering of steps—and I missed seeing Santa Claus!

In the darkened parlor a tree stood, ablaze with lights, and right in the very front the mate of the apron that was made for the lady's niece. It was a long time after, years after, that the thought occurred to me that perhaps it was the very apron, and the niece was a myth. What a Christmas that was! Every conceivable want or wish was met. I even had a drum and was allowed to beat it. The week was a long dream of happiness.

Another Christmas—one when I learned I was now a big girl. My presents, a box of candy and some nuts; a long box and a round box contained an ermine cape and muff; a queer-shaped box, a hood; some books, and a breastpin. Not one toy—everything "grown-up" and useful. That morning I bade good-by to the little girl who had been me, and became "a grown-up."



Make people happy, and there will not be half the quarreling or a tenth part of the wickedness there is.—*Mrs. L. M. Child.*